A

LETTER

TO THE

Right Hon.

H. G——TT—N.

FEBRUARY, 1795.

1609/3787

TO THE

RIGHT HON.

H. G----TT--N.

SIR,

ACCUSTOMED, as I have been, ſince my early acquaintance with politics, to look up to you, as the Guardian Genius of my country, by the magic of your eloquence lulling to ſleep the Dragon of Corruption—think what muſt be my feelings, conceive for a moment the aſtoniſhment of your Conſtituents, when they ſaw you deſcend from that elevation to which you had been raiſed by the voice of a grateful people, and marſhal thoſe talents on the ſide of Miniſtry,

Miniſtry, which were due to nature and your country. I felt my opinion fluctuate between prejudice and reaſon before I determined againſt you; but at length the deluſion vaniſhed, and I ſaw you, after running with ſucceſs the race of popularity, and finding nothing more to gain, enter boldly the liſts, as courtier, and voluntarily wear thoſe chains whoſe horrors, in the rant of your *ci-devant* patriotiſm, you had ſo admirably painted.

As the motives, Sir, which produced this derilection of your former opinions, may not be ſufficiently clear to your conſtituents, I ſhall, as a perſon not writing merely for your peruſal, in ſpite of the cant of *alarm*, for which you have become an advocate, in ſpite of that ſophiſtry with which you endeavour to cover your miſrepreſentations, develope the cauſes of this rapid change, from the haughty and indignant patriot, ſcorning alike the terrors and carreſſes of Miniſters, to the facile, acquieſcent courtier, anticipating the wiſhes of his maſter. Before I enter on this office, I cannot avoid giving way to a reflection, the truth of which I ſuppoſe you, yourſelf, muſt, e'er now, be acquainted, viz.—that men of depraved hearts and moderate talents have frequently in times of public miſfortune, by the mere ſtate of circumſtances, attained an height of eſtimation and popularity to which they were not entitled; and that theſe very men, when times had altered their complexion,

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plexion, and virtue did not hold out equal inducements with vice to their paſſions, boldly threw off the maſk, and, ſnake-like, turned upon and bit their benefactors, who, in the hour of wretchedneſs, warmed and conſoled them. Frequent examples can be quoted in favour of this from the laſt volume of the world, now before us. Had *Marat* lived for one year more, he might have been conſigned to the execration of the French; while *Robeſpierre*, by living one year leſs, might have lived for ever on the columns of the Pantheon. I know not, Sir, whether this reflection will ſuggeſt to you any kind of analogy between the circumſtance of their caſe and your own; but I am ſtrongly of opinion, that the bulk of my readers will take this reflection higher, and ſay, "Had Gr-tt-n died before the French Revolution, he might have avoided the reproaches and reſentment of his country:" but it is not ſo, and you have lived to ſee your laurels drop their withered leaves in the grave of your popularity—you have lived to ſee the face of nature deſolated by a horrible war, to which you have given your ſupport—Engliſh influence, or venal majority are no longer the objects of your terror, but *French equality* and *irreligion*—and, forgetting the evils which prey on the vitals of your country—unmindful of the hydra that preys upon her rights, you cowardly fling your empty menaces,

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and level your impotent defiance againſt an object beyond your reach, and ſuperior to your reſentment.

When once we forfeit the good opinion of mankind, our very beſt actions are liable to be aſcribed to the very worſt motives; and with reaſon, you therefore, Sir, ſhould not be aſtoniſhed, if, in reviewing the different ſtages of your political conduct, the world ſhould conſider theſe ſervices which you fondly imagine have rendered you immortal, deſigned by you merely as the foundation of a character which may enhance your value in the eye of the Miniſter. To be plain, Sir, they may begin to think, that what *Flood* ſaid of you in the H. of Commons is not without foundation—and they may conceive themſelves juſtified in theſe ſuſpicions by what they may term your conſequent apoſtacy. When ſuſpicion makes its way into the mind of man, it is impoſſible to tell where it may end. The company you keep—your intimacy at the Caſtle, will be taken into conſideration: nay, even the *trifling* circumſtance of your ſitting ſo graceful on the Treaſury Bench, will be brought as demonſtration againſt you. To this humiliating ſtate, to theſe degrading ſuſpicions, are you ſubjected, by failing to take the ſenſe of your conſtituents, whom you look on as warriors impatient of battle, while, with the ſolicitude of *Noah*, they are anxiouſly looking out

out for the dove that is to bring them the laurel of peace. Had you ſpared a part of the time you waſted at the toilette in ornamenting yourſelf ſince you became a courtier, for the levee, in conſulting the mirror of public opinion, and had you examined your political conduct thereon, according to the rules laid down by Mr. *Burk*, in his beautiful and energetic deſcription of the Houſe of Commons, you might have diſcovered, that ſo far from your being the expreſs image of that part of the people you repreſent, the moſt diſtant likeneſs between you and them does not exiſt. I know, Sir, in place of that national popularity you have loſt, you are endeavouring to create a partial popularity, with which you may condole yourſelf for your loſt greatneſs. I know, Sir, you intend to ſhield yourſelf from public reproach, by covering yourſelf with the ægis of Catholic Emancipation, and Volunteer Defence—But the Catholics and Volunteers, accuſtomed by their misfortunes to meaſure public acts by the ſtrict rules of a civic, military, and mechanical philoſophy, will not fail to trace them, with all other effects, to their cauſes, and I think the concluſions this mode of reaſoning will bring them to, will not be much in your favour. The Catholic, when his chains are taken off, may be led to enquire why they were ſo, or why they were ever put on. The latter he will not fail to

aſcribe

aſcribe to the narrow policy of bigoted and guilty apprehenſion; the former, he may think proceeded from the agitated ſtate of the human mind—from the Revolutions of America, France, Geneva, and Holland. In ſhort, Sir, three million of men, inſtead of expreſſing any ſort of ſurprize at the overthrow of this infernal fabric of perſecution, may only wonder why it did not fall before, or why it ever was erected. If, Sir, you have not loſt your memory by aſſociating with Mr. *Pitt*, I beg leave to refer you to the language of an honeſt courtier, when the ſaucy claims of the Catholics were ſubmitted to the Houſe of Commons, and then let me aſk you, if it be not ſufficient to induce the Roman Catholics to queſtion your liberality. "The Roman Catholics," he ſaid, "are indebted for their advantages to the pen of *Pain* and the ſword of *Dumourier*." Now, Sir, without commenting on this paſſage, I ſhall only ſay, this gentleman ſhould have known his leſſon better before he entered that Houſe. He was not aware what a dangerous theme he threw out for popular diſcuſſion. He did not, I am ſure, ſuppoſe that this reaſoning might be ſubject to have this concluſion drawn from it: if the pen of *Pain*, and the ſword of *Dumourier*, have produced a partial repeal, the encreaſing knowledge of the world, aided by the mightier ſwords of *Pichegru* and *Jourdan*, have annihilated the whole code.

I ſhall not myſelf ſay one word on the motives which determined the Legiſlature to take off thoſe degrading incapacities from this valuable claſs of the people. I am pleaſed on many accounts that it did happen, as I think the Catholics, now that they have been brought to a level with Proteſtants, will unite with them and all other orders of Iriſhmen in raiſing each other to the level of MAN. All unconſtitutional reſtraints they ſee enjoyed in common—all partial advantages, and the conſideration of common injuries, will naturally ſuggeſt a union of ſentiment and affection.

As my buſineſs, Sir, is more immediately with yourſelf, I ſhall paſs by thoſe public acts in which you only bore a ſhare, and examine what is excluſively your own, amongſt which may be claſſed your ſpeech at the opening of the ſeſſions of 94, containing the doctrine of "ſtand and fall," together with that myſtic, ſophiſticating language with which in this you vainly endeavour to render popular a war which has filled Europe with blood and tears. But firſt, I muſt do you the juſtice to mention the little hypocracy which appeared in the choice of the terms—"ſtand and fall." Not yet ſufficiently a courtier to amuſe the people with the proſpect of riſing with the fortunes of Britain, you left them at full leiſure to draw this natural and almoſt

almoſt neceſſary inference. Britain has been graciouſly pleaſed to order us to die in her defence—but Britain is not willing, if ſucceſsful, to admit us to a participation of her advantages: if ſhe falls, we muſt periſh with her—if ſhe ſucceeds, we remain as we are, without l---s, c---ſt——n, or r----ſ———n. This uncivic language, which for folly and cruelty in the annals of Parliamentary apoſtacy ſtands without a rival; lays Ireland like the ſurviving wife or huſband who in ſome countries are obliged to bury themſelves with their departed conſorts, under the neceſſity of deſcending alive into the tomb, where England, waſted by the corruption of her conſtitution and ruined by the quackery of her miniſters, is about to be laid for ever. Did Ireland merit ſuch treatment at *your* hands? Did ſhe deſerve that *G--tt-n*, on whom ſhe had laviſhed the choiceſt of her favours, ſhould tie her up for ſacrifice, in order that ſhe may accompany her *generous*, *faithful* ally, Britain, on her way from the world of nations? But why do I endeavour to rouſe thoſe generous ſentiments which rendered you dear to Ireland and illuſtrious to Europe—obliterated by the hateful hand of corruption, they have left a wide and ſpacious blank, which you are filling up with forced arguments and diſtorted expreſſion, drawn from the rhapſodies of the

Engliſh

Engliſh *Pylades* and *Oreſtes*, Mr. *B---ke* and Mr. *P--t*. "If," ſaid you, "the French get poſſeſſion of all the ports from Breſt to the North Sea, Ireland is undone." While you ſpoke, they did poſſeſs them, and the conſequence, if your reaſoning be good, is, that Ireland is undone. Next you adduce Nootka Sound, where the object you ſay was unimportant, and the exertions immenſe. But what does this prove, but the want of talent and wickedneſs of the miniſter, who has ſo exhauſted the reſources of the country as to be unable to exceed, at this momentous period, his former exertions, when he wiſhed to quarrel about a ſtraw—But at length, diſdaining all reſtraint, you launch into an ocean of raphſody, which, if poſſeſſing any degree of ſignification at all, was ſo exceedingly puerile, that I recollect only the following ſtring of terms, which you poſſibly meant as contraſts between the preſent conteſt, and the Nootka bone of contention, viz. *a ſhip*; *a neck of land*; *Nootka Sound*; *Europe*; *the World*. *Now the Created are in danger*:—(and you do not bluſh to aſſert—*that the* CREATOR *himſelf is not ſafe from the fury of the French Convention*). Thus, Sir, do you ſupport thoſe politics which you took up in a ſeaſon of weakneſs, in a ſtile of phrenzy equal to the madneſs of the project; and, like the diſtempered wretch who in his madneſs becomes infidel, and blaſphemes againſt the

the Almighty, you inſinuate, that one of our reaſons for perſevering in the conteſt, is to guarantee to Heaven ſecurity from the French.—But, Sir, this oration of your's is not more remarkable for it's dearth of ſound reaſon and argument, than for its abuſe of metaphor and the diſtortion of its figures. As I do not wiſh to advance any thing againſt you without proof, I ſhall produce thoſe paſſages on which I ground this opinion. *The throne of Spain flies before them* ; [meaning before the French]. Poets frequently ſpeak of winged horſes and chariots, but never did I hear of a *throne* indulged with wings before, tho' they would be exceedingly uſeful in thoſe days of alarm. *The world is before you, whence you may chooſe—but touch not the Gallic Plant, its fruit is death, though it is not the tree of knowledge.*

Now, Sir, examine, by Mr. *Lock's* definition, (which, by the bye, I do not think a good one, or any other definition of wit) and if you can prove it ſterling, notwithſtanding all your blunders, I ſhall give you the praiſe of ingenuity ; mean time I ſhall prove, that in point of reaſon it is the moſt abſurd, and, in point of politics, the moſt unconſtitutional doctrine ever broached by any of the ſuſpenders of the *Habeas Corpus* act. By the Plant of Gallic growth, 'tis univerſally underſtood, the Conſtitution or Government of France was meant by you ; and this

univerſality

univerſality of opinions proceeds, I am apt to think, from the impoſſibility of its receiving any other ſignification. Now, Sir, if this be allowed, the literal meaning of the paſſage ſtands thus: The political world is before you, filled with a variety of *choice* governments; ſuch as the Ruſſian government, the Pruſſian government, the Turkiſh, the Spaniſh, or the Popiſh; you may revolt when you pleaſe, and chuſe any of theſe governments—but have nothing to do with the government of France; its fruit is death: whereas, the medicinal virtues of *Suwarro's* ſword have cured thouſands at the ſtorming of Praga. This, Sir, is plainly paving the way for an arbitrary government, but be aſſured, Sir, that if ever Ireland ſhould be ſo unfortunate as to loſe her preſent bleſſed ſyſtem of government, it's inhabitants would be much more willing to put themſelves under a Democracy, than ſubmit to the infamy and brutality of deſpotic domination.

You conclude this heaven-born figure by an antitheſis which reflects a ſtigma on all the cabinets of the allies, viz. *But 'tis not the tree of knowledge*: that is, the French government wants knowledge. This is going too far. I think the moſt bare-faced ariſtocracy muſt allow, that a government which had raiſed a nation in a maſs—had carried on the moſt extenſive ſyſtem of military and naval operations—had perfected

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the ſcience of tactics—had explored the unknown regions of philoſophy, and enlarged it by new diſcoveries—to conclude, Sir, I thought that a government which with one hand had cruſhed the moſt terrible prolific hydra of internal rebellion, and with the other, repelled all Europe from her frontiers, might at leaſt be ſecure from the charge of imbecility or folly: for our own ſake, we ſhould take imbecility and ignorance from the vocabulary of indiſcriminate abuſe which we have formed for the French, leſt theſe epithets ſhould fall with redoubled force on our own heads. They have defeated us and all Europe: our beſt-laid projects they have diſconcerted. The ſchemes of our cabinet appear *little*, when compared to the GIGANTIC plans, manœuvres, and operations of their Committee of Public Welfare. If, after all this, you contend they want knowledge, I aſſert, that we are more deficient in the knowledge neceſſary to bring war to a happy concluſion.

When I ſet about writing this letter, I did intend to confine my ſtrictures to your political conduct, but as I went on, it occurred to me, that the fame of your oratory was not ſo firmly, or ſo juſtly eſtabliſhed, but that a fair and impartial examination might diſcover ſome flaws in the fabric. I have read ſome of your ſpeeches ---I have heard you ſpeak myſelf; I was pleaſed with

with your declamation; perhaps 'twas eloquence; well, I will not diſpute it; the ſubject itſelf was eloquence. The Genius of Hibernia rouſing from the lethargy in which he had been thrown by Engliſh influence, ſurveying with ſhame and indignation his diſgraceful ſituation ---raiſing his venerable head from the duſt; like Neptune, when the furious ſons of Æolus had broke upon his kingdom, and calling out, with a voice like thunder, for redreſs---was an awful picture indeed; you need but deſcribe it, and 'twas eloquence. There are ſchool boys who would be eloquent on ſuch a theme; but eloquence, according to *Bolingbroke*, muſt flow like a ſtream that is fed by an abundant ſpring, and not ſpout forth like a little frothy water on ſome gaudy day, and remain dry the reſt of the year. The orators of Greece and Rome (compared to whom *indeed* you are no orator) were the ſtateſmen and miniſters of their country, who took more pains to enlarge the fountain from whence it flowed, than to conduct the ſtream of eloquence; who travelled as the Ambaſſadors of their country; ratified treaties; broke the force of hoſtile confederacies, and raiſed the glories of their country: compare with theſe your oratory, your talents, your ---*principles*.——*Cicero*, defeated a real conſpiracy by his eloquence and his wiſdom. You aſſociate with thoſe who con---e a——ſt the people

people. *Demoſthenes*, inſtead of exhorting his country to join the confederacy with *Philip*, againſt *Phocis*, conjures them to aſſiſt *Phocis*, againſt the confederacy. You, continually panegerize the cauſe of the infamous confederacy of Pilnitz, and exhort your country to continue its aſſociate. Both the wars were wars of religion: both termed juſt and neceſſary.—— But view the conſequence. The deſtruction of Phocis was the deſtruction of Grecian liberty; the deſtruction of France would be the deſtruction of Europe.

But my letter is inſenſibly ſwelling to a ſize far beyond what I had intended; therefore, as I do not deſign this as the laſt favour you ſhall ſtand indebted to me for, I ſhall reſerve my remaining thoughts as the ſubject of another epiſtle.

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